

How to Run

by Soldier78

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Summary: "Her name was Tristen...Tristen's last name and background remains a mystery to us. She keeps to herself most of the time and stays at Gothi the Elder's home... She has also proven on number occasions to be a skilled swordfighter and ability to wield other weapons...Oh and I forgot to mention, this secret has challenged us, Vikings on Berk." First of 'How To' Arc. Read/Review!

## 1. Prologue

**\*\*Hello everybody. Okay, okay, you know me, the kid who makes up OCs and there's quite a number of them in my How to Train Your Dragon fanfics. However, here is clarificationâ€|This character is a new one introduced. She is quite like Saro only I changed her story. Saro will not be featured in any more fanfics due to complications. I will not tell you about Tristen because you will read about her.**

**\*\***

**\*\*Please review and enjoy! I really appreciate feedback.**

**\*\***

**\*\*~Soldier78~\*\***

How to Run

Prologue

This is Berk. This is the home of Vikings and now, dragons. Located on the meridian of misery, north of Hopeless and south of Freezing-to-Death, the island is filled with people just as tasteless as our food. The isle has such a wonderful variety of weather. Nine months of our year are dazzled with snow and the other three months filled with sleet, rain and limited sun.

However, our normal lives before the war was long over, is not the case today. I, along with my friends, am in charge of training new

dragons and teaching new recruits how to train them. Sometimes it's fun, but some other times, it can be almost impossible.

It would be a usual morning for us, Vikings. Many would get up and fly their dragon around, that remained the same with Toothless, my best friend and the only Night Fury people have seen, and myself. Next would be getting a quick breakfast at the Great, or sometimes known as the Mead, Hall. Then it was to work at the Forge for the rest of the day.

My mentor, Gobber the Belch, found his time more devoted to the new training recruits and after a while of overwhelming work, I convinced Gobber to hire new help for the shop. Her name was Tristen.

Tristen's last name and background remains a mystery to us. I found her in the sea one day when I was out flying, she appeared to be shipwrecked but I brought her to the Elder's hut until she was nursed back to health. However, She keeps to herself most of the time and stays at Gothi the Elder's home. She has brown hair tied into a single, short ponytail. She's perhaps the same height as me. She has also proven on number occasions to be a skilled swordfighter and have the ability to wield other weapons.

Oh and I forgot to mention, Tristen's secret was revealed one day and it challenged us, Vikings of Berk.

To be continued.

**\*\*Please, Click that button. \*\***

## 2. Tristen

**\*\*Please review and enjoy!\*\***

**\*\*~Soldier78~\*\***

How to Run

Ch.1: Tristen

A brilliant sound combination of hammering and grinding chorused throughout the area. Two dragons slumbered outside of the Forge. There was one sleek, black skinned dragon that bathed in the sun and there was one, semi-orange-skinned dragon that cooled off in the shade.

Berk knew that Hiccup owned the black-skinned Night Fury, but the other reptile had become Tristen's own dragon. The most unknown dragon onto Berk was trained by the most mysterious human on Berk, the Changewing dragon.

Inside the Forge, Hiccup Haddock, the most experienced out of the duo, hammered away at the anvil as Tristen worked on sharpening a new axe. They worked in silence until a burly man marched towards the counter with a chiefly look on his face. Chief Stoick the Vast, Hiccup's father and Chief of Berk, approached the store.

"Hiccup?"

The sounds of work faded out as they both paused.

"Dadâ€¦what're youâ€¦doing here?" Hiccup asked, slowly and unsurely of his sudden arrival.

"I came to tell you some news." Stoick stated, firmly. He was unaware of Tristen's presence. However, Tristen resumed working.

"What is it?"

Tristen overheard the conversation from her spot at her own worktable where she rebalanced the axe with a new handle.

"The rumors were proven to be true. Legendary Viking Ragvar the Fierce is visiting us along with his men."

There was a loud noise coming from depths of the building. Hiccup turned and Stoick looked over his shoulder at the briefly stunned Tristen.

"S'rry." Came the soft voice of Tristen. She collected her dropped object and quickly returned to work. She shared a corner-side glance at the two Vikings before continuing where she left off. Hiccup then diverted his attention to his father.

"Wow Dad, that'sâ€¦great." Hiccup said, trying to find the right word to express this surprise visit. Ragvar the Fierce was, as Stoick claimed, legendary. He was feared across the mighty sea that divided the Viking settlement from the Norse sea into the other settlements that were non-Viking. One of Hiccup's friends, Fishlegs, once told him that the enemies where the repulsive Irish natives. Their land was called Ireland and now these days, the land was unlike the other Viking settlements in Wessex, Orkney, Shetland and other already Viking-inhabited territories. Their natives are starting to rebel against the Norse-Gaels and any other Vikings that attempt to take the throne from their High King. However, Ragvar has been known for conquering strong Irish rebellions and capturing the notorious leaders, assisting in vanquish of the threat of an uprising that could forever banish Norse civilization from the nation.

Once Stoick told Hiccup of his responsibility as the heir, he sauntered away to attend to more of his leadership duties. Before Hiccup could return to work, he looked over his shoulder at his assistant who checked her handiwork with the axe before setting it aside and picking up a spearhead. Tristen was not naturally clumsy, not like him at least. Her quick mutter was softer than usual, filled with shock over the news. Perhaps, she was either surprised at the hero's sudden visit because she was a fan like his father or maybe, she knew of him another way.

But nothing else gave Hiccup his reason to question her. The teen hid her emotions quite well, just like his girlfriend who was progressing in opening up a bit more and any other sort of hints would be her facial expressions but the shadows had concealed it just as well as her emotions.

Tristen called it a day at the end of her shift when the shop would close up for the day. She hung up her apron, retrieved her sword

hidden in the corner of the shop and jogged out before Hiccup could stop her. She already jumped onto the back of her dragon and commanded her reptile off.

Hiccup watched as the two mysterious breeds fly off.

Gothi heard the door open and looked up from her boiling pot of stew. She saw the slender body of Tristen walk in one of her happier moods, Gothi could tell that she had flown a bit with her dragon. She was always smiling after a nice flight.

"Good flying today?"

"We went high." Tristen commented.

Many knew that Gothi and Tristen shared a bond. Even though it was Hiccup would found her shipwrecked in the water, it was Gothi who nursed her back to health and gave her shelter after her many attempts of escape.

However, inside the Elder's hut, Tristen's secret didn't exist. It was incidental when Tristen was discovered by Gothi. It wasn't hard for the wise elder to figure it out. She pieced together the symbol of her pendent and her sword's hilt and then she was able to confirm her guesses with Tristen herself when she, unusual for a Viking, posed against the bed. Her elbows pressed on the linens, her knees sunk into the floor, her head tilted downwards and she could hear the mutters of, not Norse, but a different language she was able to recognize.

Tristen found out that same night and tried to hide it but Gothi reprimanded her for her covering and told her that she was not one to blurt out a secret. And since then, whatever bond they share, became strong and Tristen found seclusion from the Viking world in the hut, able to be what her true identity allows her to be.

"How was work today, Tristen?" Gothi asked as she poured stew into a bowl designated for the girl. When Gothi handed it to her, Tristen looked at the contents with distant eyes.

"Iâm|umâ€|"

The Chief's announcement replayed in her mind and so did the memories of a forgotten past.

"Stop stammering, Tristen." Gothi ordered. "I am too old to decipher everything."

"It was fine." Tristen answered. "A lot of orders to fill but I got my bit done today."

Gothi read Tristen's face. She saw the girl churning the stew with the wooden spoon, distant, glazed eyes.

"What's wrong, child?"

Tristen lifted the spoon in surprise, contents dribbling back into the dish.

"Wrong?" She croaked.

"Child, you shouldn't hide things from a wise old hag. You know that." Gothi admonished. Tristen sighed.

"I need to get out of here."

"And why is that Child?"

"The Chief says that Ragvar the Fierce is due for a mighty appearance." Tristen replied. "And well, I am not quite worthy of his presence."

She had a different take of sarcasm compared to Hiccup but it was nonetheless entertaining. Gothi knew the risks that Tristen would be facing, however, she had a better solution.

"Child, you know that running is not always the answer."

"I should know." Tristen grumbled as her chin fell into her palm. Her other hand still held the bowl. "Then what can I do?"

The Elder thought for a moment before standing up. She retreated, slowly, into an adjacent room. Tristen was still intrigued on how big this house is compared to the outside. Gothi came back in with a horned helmet and held it out to her.

"You already wear the traditional clothes of a Viking." Gothi pardoned. "Conceal your necklace and your sword until he leaves."

To be continued

**\*\*Please, click that button\*\***

### 3. Ragvar the Fierce

**\*\*Please read and review! Thank you, not much to say for this chapter. \*\***

**\*\*~Soldier78~\*\***

How to Run

ch.2: Ragvar the Fierce

Tristen fixed the large helmet for the third time that morning. She kept her hair down. Her sash felt bare without the weight of a scabbard and she felt awkward without the pendent that would brush over the skin under her tunic.

A crowd gathered to meet the newcomer and his legion of Vikings. Tristen aimed the helmet to cover her eyes from seeing eyes. Stoick shook hands with the mighty Viking and she only glared at the man who laughed from a joke Gobber had indulged him in.

Hatred rushed through her veins, her fists clenched and her blood ran cold. Stoick had barked at his villagers.

"Back teh work, all of yeh!"

Tristen wasn't the last one to scam under the scrutinizing eyes of Ragvar.

Tristen ran her finger over the sharp end of the sword. She gasped as the sliver bit into her skin. She was grateful that Hiccup wasn't drawn away from his iron sheet that he was working hard to perfect. Tristen walked over to her finished pile, two rows of neatly aligned weaponry cascaded across the left end of the table while the right was a sloppy pile of more work. She picked up from that said pile and returned to the grinder's wheel.

"Hey Tristen?" Hiccup called as he had the brief moment of studying her.

"Aye?" Tristen said, absently as she held the sword to the stone.

"Why are you wearing a helmet and where is your sword?" Hiccup asked. Tristen smacked her lips, coming up with a fine excuse to brush him off.

"A) I wanted to test it out. And B) No use of hauling it along if I won't use it today." Tristen stated.

"But you always have your sword whether or not you train." Hiccup observed.

"What are you," Tristen scoffed. She tossed her head briefly in the air. "My mathair?"

Hiccup blinked, puzzled.

'Mathair?' He thought to himself.

Tristen rolled her eyes and removed the weapon from the wheel. Hiccup's eyes followed the strode of the almost-complete stranger to him. She effortlessly set down the weapon she was strong enough to carry and she turned to him, untying her apron.

"Well, it's time for my break." Tristen stated. She hung up the garb once again.

"Where are you going?" Hiccup asked.

"Quick flight around the island." Tristen shouted as she mounted on the Changewing which remained nameless to the Viking because he couldn't remember the name. It was a short name, that he remembered but the pronunciationâ€¦|.

His thoughts were flattened when Tristen skyrocketed into the air. She released a loud joyful howl. Her helmet completely knocked off by the sudden change in wind speed. Hiccup eyed the helmet before running out and grabbing it. He waved it and shouted out to her.

"Wait your helmet!"

But she was gone.

Tristen gasped when the figure of Ragvar was coming closer to her

thanks to her dragon's acrobatics.

"Up, Stro." She ordered, quietly. She knew her helmet was long behind, most likely at the Forge. She cursed to herself mid-air when the metal headgear flew off and she felt a sudden draft.

Stro gracefully ascended, narrowly missing Ragvar. However, Ragvar's attention adverted to the sudden shift of wind. His eyes followed the rider, narrowed on her face which was, luckily, blinded by the sun. His contorted face lightened as he faced Stoick.

"Stoick, who was that dragon rider?" He asked.

"That is Tristen, our newest villager." Stoick said with pride. "She's quite a mystery to us, though. We don't even know where she came from."

Ragvar's eyes fell back on the distant spec of the teenager.

"I see."

Tristen was true to her promise. She came back and worked her rest of the shift. Hiccup had taken his own break after she returned to stretch Toothless's wings and to have a quiet moment with Astrid, his girlfriend.

She hummed a tune as she straightened up the shop a bit. Her helmet was back on her head after Hiccup had given it to her.

Her string of notes timed with the sweep of the broom. Hiccup found the tune completely unfamiliar but rather pretty.

Hiccup had been studying a blueprint of a new sword when he heard a clear of a throat. His head turned and he found the sight of Ragvar the Fierce.

"Ohâ€¦good afternoon sir." Hiccup said as he set down the parchment and walked up to the counter.

Tristen paused her work and gasped when she saw the visitor. Immediately, she turned her body to have her back face him.

"Yeh are Stoick's boy, correct?" Ragvar's bellow voice responded.

"I-I am." Hiccup stuttered.

"Don't stammer boy, it is unmanly." Ragvar scolded. Tristen snuck a look over her shoulder and could see the wicked grin he was casting.

That wicked grinâ€¦she huffed and her eyes were glued back onto the floor. A tear threatened to leave her eye. That wicked grinâ€¦

Her arms made steady movement as it swept up the pesky particles that drifted from the used stone. She tried to ignore the powerful voice of Ragvar. His voice chilled her bones and angered her most unusually.

"What can I do for you sir?" Hiccup asked, now much more

confidently.

"Tha's better." Ragvar said and he hefted a sword onto the counter. "Have your assistant sharpened this. Also, it could use a good polish."

"Yes sir." Hiccup said, taking the heavy sword between the end of the scabbard and the hilt. He winced at how heavy the weaponry was and he tried to walk normally under the weight. He set it on Tristen's table and she looked over at it. She sighed and nodded when Hiccup gave her even more orders.

Ragvar looked at the teen who's gaze went back to the floor. Second time that day she escaped the investigating gaze of the hulky Viking.

Ragvar eventually left with one last order to have it done tonight. Tristen set aside her broom and picked up the sword. Her hand slowly withdrew it by the hilt and she looked at the blade. Her eyes fell to the hilt and she frowned at the crossguards.

"\_Tristen!\_"

\_Whack!\_

She wanted to refuse this one so much but her eyes fell on Hiccup who was paying attention to his own work. Her hand was dwarfed by the handle, the crossguards and blade certainly needed some refining. Sullenly, her head twisted away from the blade as she walked over to the grinder's wheel.

Hiccup jumped at the sudden eruption of noise. His eyes glowered over to the girl who stared at the sword with such grief. It was as if she knew that weapon and not kindly either.

Tristen promised to clean up after leaving Hiccup to it the night before. The sun was about to go down. She noticed after hefting a large shield on the rack. She tidied up the various papers that were scattered from a day's work. She was about to pour water on the embers of the coal when she heard a voice.

"Blacksmith."

She turned her head and almost staggered back, she quickly retracted her head and fixed her helmet.

"I came for my sword." Ragvar demanded. Nodding her head, she quickly fetched the clean and sharpened sword that she finished shortly before Hiccup left for the night. She picked it up by the scabbard and held it with both her hands. She stared murderously at it before finally setting it down on the counter and turning to her pail she left on the worktable.

She heard the \_schlink \_from the sword exiting the scabbard. Under a dim light, he studied it.

"All of yer doing?" He asked.

She grunted in response.



"Answer me."

She disguised her voice.

"Yes." She spoke, deeply. To her, it sounded disgusting and hurt her throat a bit. Ragvar nodded.

"Very nice handiwork." He commented, nicely. She closed her eyes suddenly when he sheathed the sword. She then heard the clatter of an object resonate on the counter. "Good night."

"G'night." She voiced, quietly. Ragvar gave her one look before finally walking away. Tristen turned and reached over to pick up the fallen object. A silver coin. Realizing how late it was as she stared at the back of the Viking, she quickly pocketed the coin and doused the embers before finally waking up StrÃ³ and walking back to the Elder's hut.

Once she disappeared into the home, the door closed and Ragvar stood there, an amoral grin adorned.

To be continued

\*\*Please, click that button. \*\*

#### 4. Holmgang

\*\*Okay guys, some quick things. This story is not long but I will tell you that this is part of a trilogy I plan to conduct. A sequel is in the works as well as many one-shots that will follow the arc. Think of it like the TV series serving as the bridge between the first movie and the second movie. No worries, I'm confident that you will like the other two stories I have in the works. So, done with my ramble, I give you the next chapter of How to Run!\*\*

\*\*Please review and thank you to those who already have. Disclaimer, I own nothing. \*\*

\*\*~Soldier78~\*\*

How to Run

#### Ch.3: Holmgang

Next morning, Tristen had the morning off and would return to work in the afternoon. She snuck into the deep woodlands of the forest, her sword carried by her sash as she ran.

She jumped over roots and boulders to get to the clearing. Tristen stopped running when she saw an axe fly across the air and impressively lodge itself in the trunk of a tree. Tristen straightened her back after catching her breath.

"Impressive." Tristen stated, wisely as she entered the field. Astrid had yanked the weapon out and looked at the newcomer.

"You're late." Astrid remarked, her axe firm in her grip. Tristen chuckled.

"Sorry." She replied with a modest shrug. "Late night at the Forge."

"Clean-up duty?" Astrid asked, leaning on her axe.

"Aye. Yer boyfriend plays fair." Tristen answered with a tilted nod. A confident grin molded and she withdrew her blade sharply. "So we going to spar er wha'?"

With a smirk, Astrid kicked up her axe and the duo began their playful fight. In their fights, Tristen was able to forget about the past events as she refined her cunning abilities with her sparring partner who looked to do the same.

Tristen and Astrid had a budding friendship, they were both similar in so many ways. After another incident with Tristen, she looked to train with the blonde Viking. The two had their strengths and weaknesses and agreed to work together in perfect it in the best way possible, repeating sparring matches. At times, Astrid would win with brute strength and at other times, Tristen was the victor with cleverness and the keen eye.

Though it was a workout, there was never a match where Tristen went without tossing friendly insults into the spar. Astrid would retort and the two would be trying not to laugh as their weapons collided. Most matches lasted a pretty long time which meant there wasn't more than three fights per session.

Tristen laughed, haughtily as she finally kicked Astrid unto her back and had the blade pointed at her chest, a good distance away.

"Winner." Tristen taunted as she withdrew the sword. She leaned over and held out her hand, pulling her up to her feet.

"Okay, fine. I'll give you that one." Astrid responded. Tristen grinned and Astrid picked up her fallen axe and jumped to her feet. "How about two out of three?"

Hiccup looked windswept after his great flight that defined physics in every way possible. He noticed the two girls emerging from the forestry, Tristen had said something witty that made his girlfriend laugh. Hiccup loved to hear Astrid laughed, however, he wondered how Tristen sounded to when she was joyous.

"Good training today?"

"Yer girlfriend put up a good fight." Tristen teased. She looked over at her friend. "Though, I still beat her today."

Astrid punched Tristen. She grimaced from pain and rubbed the new bruise. Finally, Astrid took Hiccup's hand and started for the Great Hall for lunch. Hiccup stopped and looked over his shoulder.

"Coming to lunch, Tristen?" He asked.

"Yeah," Tristen said. She jabbed her thumb at the Elder's hut. "I got teh quickly deal with something real quick though. I'll be there in a few."

She quickly sprinted and opened the door. She snuck inside, throwing her sword onto the bed and picking up the helmet from her night stand. She muttered a hasty farewell for Gothi who was smashing up herbs.

"Careful, child!" She chided as the door slammed close. Gothi chuckled. "Fool-hardy teenagers."

Tristen found the table of Hiccup's Viking friends and Gobber seemed to grace them with their presence and was telling a fabulous tale, of when he almost lost his other leg.

"So there I was, my sword long from my hand. My opponent, ready to cleave my arm in half. He released a roar so loud that it shook the earth around." Gobber regaled. He raised his interchangeable hand in the air, emphasizing the dramatic epic. "With by some wit from myself, I used my peg for a weapon. It jabbed into his stomach, he released a bloodcurdling yowl as loud as a wolf. Blood dripping from his gut and I valiantly picked up my sword and finished him off."

"Whoa." Fishlegs voiced. "It must've been crazy to think that you could've been stabbed or something, but your leg-"

"So what are we talkin' about 'ere?" Tristen asked, setting down the tray and sitting down herself.

"Some fight Gobber had on some other island." Snotlout, Hiccup's cousin, bluntly interjected.

"A Viking duel, young Tristen." Gobber said with much more emotion. "A holmgang."

"A holmgang?" Tristen asked, arching her brow. "What's tha'?"

"It's a duel where Vikings challenge each other after some sort of feud or argument. It is either fought in a small circle or on a deserted island." Hiccup explained.

"So these duelsâ€¦were they life or death?"

"It depended on the tribe, Tristen." Gobber explained. "Or the competitors. It could be fought until first blood is shed or until a life is taken."

"Are they frequent?" Tristen asked. To her, they sounded so barbaric.

"It used to be as popular as a sport." Gobber informed her. "However, times do changeâ€¦."

After that, subjects were changed. Gobber had asked Hiccup of the work in the Forge.

"Oh, it's great. Tristen is a great help." Hiccup complimented. Tristen bowed her head, blushing.

"Well, Tristen, yeh like working there?" Gobber inquired. Tristen nodded her head.

"Yes, sir. I like working there. It's better than nothing." Tristen replied. "Thank yeh fer-"

"No kiss-up behavior." Gobber scorned. "Makes me feel un-Viking-ish."

Tristen smiled and gave another nod.

Topics at lunch varied from different things and Tristen found herself content with the atmosphere. The good news was that she hadn't seen Ragvar all day and she searched to make sure he wasn't in the hall. Even her friends didn't pick up on her cautious behavior. The other good news was that she didn't face any questions about her home, past or family.

She left the Great Hall with a fulfilling meal in her belly and a good mood bubbling inside of her. Hiccup and Tristen were returning to the Forge together, Astrid was going to join them before getting on with afternoon chores.

However, something attracted Tristen's attention and it wasn't good.

To be continued.

**\*\*Please, click that button.\*\***

## 5. Irish

**\*\*Not much to say but I don't own anything and thank you for the reviews and appreciation for the story. This is part of my trilogy upcoming and please enjoy.\*\***

**\*\*Please review!\*\***

**\*\*~Soldier78~\*\***

How to Run

ch.4: Irish

It was Ragvar and his men, surrounding the door of Gothi's house. Vikings around began to gather at the sight. Ragvar was holding the Elder herself by her tunic.

"Where is she?" He barked in her face. "Where is the coward?"

"Oh no." Tristen muttered to herself. Hiccup and Astrid were behind her unable to comprehend the situation but Tristen knew and she began to approach him.

"Tristenâ€|" Astrid tried to stop her but it was fruitless. From reaching the slope of the hill, they heard Tristen's voice.

"Let her go!"

Ragvar turned and released the Elder. He pointed with his finger.

"Get her!"

Ropes flung out and caught the girl by surprise. She dodged one and evaded another, however, a body slammed into her.

She fell to the ground helpless. The Vikings just stood around as she fought the mighty grip of his men.

"Hey! Lemme go!"

She squirmed under the weight of hands that attempted to tie her wrists together.

"Ragvar, what is the meaning o' this?" shouted Stoick who pushed through the gathered crowd. Ragvar looked at Stoick.

"Do you know who this is?" Ragvar demanded to Stoick. But Stoick's confused expression told all. His voice lowered but was still shuddering. "You don't know who she is, do you?"

Before Stoick could respond, Ragvar turned to the village. He waved a pendent in the air. Tristen's necklace, a bronze-casted shape of a Celtic Cross, was held in his meaty paw as definite proof.

"This girl is Irish!" He shouted as loud as he could. "She is one of the most notorious, dangerous rebels in Ireland!"

"That is ridiculous." Stoick interrupted.

"I should arrest you too, Chief Stoick, for sheltering an enemy." Ragvar said as he approached Stoick. Tristen yanked her arm in attempt to break her restraint. She was on her knees, her wrists bounded together in the tightest knot. Two big men flanked both sides of her.

Hiccup watched in shock at Tristen as Ragvar spoke to his father.

"She is just a lass!"

"A lass who has slaughtered thousands of your people, our people!" Ragvar told. "She is Tristen O'Riley from the O'Riley clan. Her father was the Chief Fergus and together, they led a party of rebels that repelled our attempts to arrive in Dublin."

"Tristen?" Astrid asked in disbelief. The said girl squirmed against the tight ropes. It had to be a folk tale, this was completely impossible.

Ragvar turned to his men.

"Throw the fugitive in the dungeon as well as the Elder." Ragvar ordered them, loud and clear. Suddenly, Gothi was seized but Tristen shouted.

"No!"

Her cry had stopped the men.

"You have me! Don't take her!"

"I admire your courage, you rat." Ragvar hissed. "But she has fallen out of the Viking lawâ€¦.arrest!"

Stoick watched as the procession of Viking and captives moved passed and into the underground jail that was used long before the Dragon War was a threat. It was used to jail traitors and war prisoners until banishment or worseâ€¦

Hiccup jogged the best he could with one leg up to his father.

"Dad, don't let them do this." Hiccup pleaded.

Stoick looked down at his son with a defeated look on his face. He placed a hand on his shoulder.

"I'm sorry son." He apologized, placing a soft hand on his shoulder. "There's nothing I can do."

Hiccup only watched as a Berk villager led Ragvar to the hidden jail.

Tristen released a shout of pain when she was thrown into the cell. She rolled onto her knees and looked around. It was completely pitch black except for the torch that hung on the wall in front of the human cage. Tristen sniffed the air, wafting was the aroma of dragon dung.

"Great." She muttered.

She had a long time to think about today's events. She was completely revolted how she thought this would be a good day without the threats of Ragvar. She still sat on her knees that were beginning to lose feeling from the pressure. She couldn't move, she was too weak to. She thought back to the Elder, locked up to because of her. Her and that stupid identity. Tristen sighed, she could guess what the punishment for treason was and she knew the punishment for being a wanted criminal.

With a defeated expression, her head fell to the bars of her confinement.

"Great." She mumbled a second time, more grief than the first. She closed her eyes in such shame. "This is all my fault."

"No, it isn't."

Tristen looked up in surprise and found both Hiccup and Astrid kneeling down to greet the girl.

"Hiâ€¦guys." She said, looking away.

"Why didn't you tell us?" Astrid inquired.

"Why deh yeh think? To avoid all o' this." Tristen said, trying her best to gesture to the dark room. The torch light flickered enough light for Tristen to know that her two visitors were her two most loyal friends.

"Tristen,"

"I know, I'm sorry. I should've told yeh." Tristen apologized, quickly. "A little too late for tha' now."

Both wordlessly agreed but looked at the distraught teenager who was free and happy earlier in the same day.

"I don' suppose yeh know wha's the punishment do yeh?" Tristen asked. Astrid and Hiccup both exchanged sad looks and then stared at Tristen who sighed.

"Its execution, isn't it?" Tristen questioned. Their silence was confirmation enough. Tristen banged her forehead against the metal bars, the two cringed. But Tristen seemed unhurt. "This is all my fault!"

"Tristen, stop it." Astrid demanded, stopping the Irish lass to hit her head again. Tristen lifted her head.

"Why? Everythin's gone to hell anyway." Tristen stated, depressingly. "I feel like such an idiot fer thinking tha' I could've evaded 'im if I stayed on this island."

"Wait, you knew him?" Hiccup asked. Tristen nodded.

"I suppose you want a background story of me self." Tristen said.

"That would be nice."

Tristen sighed and had a good idea.

"Tell yeh what, cut these ropes and I'll tell yeh the tale." Tristen bargained. Astrid withdrew a small knife and Tristen twisted her back so that her wrists were exposed to the two Vikings. Astrid sawed through and the ropes severed. Hiccup watched as the woven material fell to the ground and Tristen flexed her hands and stood up to stretch. "Thanks."

Astrid sheathed her dagger.

"The story, Tristen." Astrid reminded. Tristen nodded and sat back down, cross-legged.

"Ragvar is one of the chiefs my aithairâ€¦ermâ€¦fatherâ€¦faced." Tristen began.

\_Tristen watched in fear as her father was knocked down by a man double the size of him. His long sword barely touching the hairs of his silver beard. \_

"\_Aithair!" Tristen cried, stabbing the body of the man she had wounded. She withdrew her sword and charged at the man who threatened her father's life. Tristen ducked another swinging axe and tripped the wielder, his life ended once he hit the ground. \_

\_Ragvar the Fierce, a towering man with dirty blonde hair, long and flowing, lifted his sword but it halted abruptly. \_

"'Arrest them' he ordered them." Tristen stated. "For some reason, he paid mercy to my father and not to other leaders. I was relieved at first but thenâ€¦"

\_Rope tightened around his wrists so suddenly. His sword was dropped, long forgotten. \_

"\_Aithair!" Tristen howled as she ran as fast as she could. Then, she felt herself tackled to the ground. She struggled as she herself were bounded by ropes and hauled to the nearest Viking drakkar along the riverside. \_

"He took me and my father to a secluded fort. Somewhere along the river." Tristen added. "I thought we were going to be okay but something I saw in Ragvar told me otherwise. Father tried to keep me calm and unafraid of whatever would happen. He told me silly tales and funny jokes, much like a father would. However, once we were brought into that fort, I knew something was completely wrong."

Tristen had her head bowed as she recalled the events in her head.

"Then what happened?"

"\_Run Tristen, get away from 'ere."\_

\_Tristen saw the terrified expression of her father. Tristen knelt down to him.\_

"\_I'm not going an'where." She said.\_

"\_Tristen, there's no time. Yeh have to run away. I'll be alright. Yeh 'ave teh go."\_

\_He was right, time was running out. The diversion thanks to fellow men in the forest were beginning to falter. The flames that licked the fortification were dying down with pails of water. Various men from the secluded area were already dead. Tristen looked back down at her father and she hugged him. \_

"\_Lord our God, please watch over my father. Bring him safely back to me after all o' this is over. I love him so much, he's all I have left. Amen."\_

"\_I love yeh too, Tristen." Her father agreed. Tristen bit her lip, tears threatening her navy eyes. "Go, please."\_

\_Tristen pressed a kiss to his head and quickly stood up. With a sprint, she ran. \_

"I turned around, so close to the forest," Tristen recalled, now a year later. "All I could see was flames. It was the last I saw o' my father. Since then, I found the battlefield where we were captured, I found my sword and soon left with the camp that saved my life."

Hiccup and Astrid shared horrified glances and Tristen spoke up again.



"They told me to run. Ragvar, they told, was n'ever a man who would let a prisoner go." Tristen said. "And with me, daughter of Fergus, the chief who have defeated Vikings many a time, it was no surprise that I wasn't the exception."

"That's why you were in the water. You were trying to run away."

"Aye. Not that hard to figure out." Tristen chided. "Fortune and luck weren't in my cards very much from tha' time, a storm came out of nowhere and destroyed the boat I sailed. Since then, I've been 'ere on Berk, running from my past."

It was still for a moment. Tristen's repressed-glazed eyes fell to the dirt ground again.

"There's got to be something we can do." Hiccup said after a while.

"What difference does it make?" Tristen spat, forcefully and utterly hopeless. "It's already too late."

"Tristen, what is wrong with you?" Astrid demanded, frustrated at her self-defeating behavior.

"What do yeh mean what's wrong with me?" Tristen barked. "I'm stuck in a prison, Gothi too. We both are sentenced to death. I know I deserve it, but does she? I'm responsible fer this mess! I should've stayed, not run. And even afterwards, I should've left Berk. None o' this would've happened!"

"Tristen, get a hold of yourself." Astrid hushed.

"Oi! Who's in there?"

"Oh no." Hiccup said, dropping his shoulders. "We have to go."

"Go then." Tristen said. "I don't want yeh punished for my sins. Go."

Astrid sighed and took out something, handing it to her. It was a piece of bread she probably stole from her own home.

"I don't want-"

"Eat it." Astrid demanded. "In the meantime, we'll think of a way to save you and Gothi."

Tristen only looked up and Hiccup towered over her, holding the bars.

"We will get you out of this mess." Hiccup determined. Tristen gave a small nod and watched the duo leave her be. Tristen's eyes fell back down to the chunk of bread in her hand. She sniffed it, it smelled like sweat. She took a bite of it, it tasted like sweat. Sticking her tongue on in disgust, she threw the food across the cell and it landed in the shadows of the darkness. She heard squeaking and knew it was mice on the other side, feasting on the new scrap.

Tristen's head fell back against the wall of the cave, she felt

completely hopeless.

To be continued.

**\*\*Please, click that button. \*\***

## 6. Execution

**\*\*Okay, so this chapter is pretty short but it is an important one. We see Tristen in a new light a bit. She gets a bit bold in this one, I've gotta say. Anyway, thanks to those who've already reviewed and please enjoy this one. I ask for feedback so please do so and I will be forever grateful. Enough rambling, onto our next chapter!\*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer, I own nothing.\*\***

**\*\*~Soldier78~\*\***

How to Run

### Ch.5: Execution

Ragvar grinned wickedly at the sun peaking over the majestic waves of the Norse sea. He smelled the fresh air and showed his yellowed teeth to the Gods before turning around and ordering his men.

"Bring out the prisoners!"

On the stone stage where was the place where the Chief would gallantly stand and announce everything from dragon exams to war tactics, Stoick stood and beside him was his son. Hiccup rubbed his arm in concern and his eyes locked with Astrid's who stood at the front of the crowd that formed around the circle.

In front of the rising sun was the block to which the prisoner would place their head. Another man stood next to it, a fine, sharpened, double-bladed axe held firmly in his hand. Hiccup watched the crowd split in two in front of the stone steps. Gothi was calmly walking up the steps without much difficulty. However, Tristen was shoved and pushed. Instead of ropes, she had shackles and she already had a cut across her cheek, probably from disobeying orders early in the morning.

Hiccup watched as Tristen barked at the man shoving her.

"I can move myself!"

It was aggressive and she marched up the steps. To Hiccup, it was a death march. She was prepared to die and was able to accept it much to Hiccup's sadness. He frowned as Tristen looked Ragvar in the eyes. Ragvar looked at her with the same glare.

"So who will go first?" Ragvar said to his two prisoners. Gothi was hunched over, not looking him in the eyes but Tristen took one step forward.

"I will." She boldly affirmed. Ragvar grinned and grabbed her by the tunic, throwing her in the way of the block.

"The mighty Irish warrior will face punishment first!" Ragvar sneered, mockingly. There was silence as Tristen sighed, approaching the wooden block with whatever dignity she had left.

"Any last words, Rebel?" Ragvar asked. Tristen cleared her throat and looked at Ragvar.

"Ireland will be free one day."

There was a sudden boo in the crowd but Tristen paid no attention as she lowered herself to the wooden block onto her knees. She looked at the sun's beauty, rising from the cress of the sea, before finally placing her neck on the object. She felt the cool sensation from the soft wind that blew her tattered tunic and mussed up hair, whistling as if it was whispering to her. She inhaled a deep breath. The axe was beginning to rise.

"Our father in heaven, hallowed be thy name"

"STOP!"

Tristen's head lifted in confusion and all eyes fell onto Hiccup who boldly stood before Ragvar.

"Hiccup, what in Thor are you doing?" Stoick asked in a hush tone. Hiccup didn't answer him.

"The Chief's right, what is this nonsense?" Ragvar challenged.

"This isn't right!" Hiccup specified. He gestured to Tristen with a pointed finger. "You can't kill her."

"And why not, boy? She is a prisoner of-"

"Only the Chief of this village can order an execution." Hiccup stated, profoundly. "It says so in our laws!"

There was various whispers among the gathered horde of Vikings. Men of Ragvar's only stood there, flanking the steps with their spears and axes, they exchanged words briefly before watching Ragvar counter the Chief's son's declaration.

"This is completely ridiculous!" Ragvar shouted. He got into Hiccup's face. His hand shot out to grab the scrawny boy by his vest. Hiccup's eyes widened in surprise and all fearlessness in his eyes was lost. "Now back off boy unless you want to join your dear friend."

"Leave him alone!"

Astrid had began to ascend the stairs. She pushed passed the guards. Ragvar looked at the girl, now furiously impatient.

"Now what?"

"You don't have the power to punish Tristen or the Elder unless the Chief says it is well okay." Astrid said, stammering in the end. Tristen felt the corner of her lip lifted in a small smile.

"Ugh, fine!" Ragvar said, exasperated. He turned to Stoick. "Chief

Stoick, do you authorize this practice?"

Stoick froze. Hiccup and Astrid both looked at him with begging eyes to recant. The villagers only looked to him in anticipation. Stoick, deep inside, never felt this conflicted before. He was under the glare of Ragvar who waited his answer.

"I have a better idea." Came a different voice. Now eyes faced her as Tristen stood up. Ragvar gave a chuckle.

"And what do you propose, bilge rat?" Ragvar spat.

"I challenge you to a holmgang!" Tristen barked, her soft voice jumped several volumes. There were unanimous gasps of shock, Hiccup and Astrid included. Ragvar guffawed.

"You can't be serious?" Ragvar hooted. "A measly child to duel me?"

"If yeh want me dead, why would yeh save the honor for another?" Tristen challenged. "Wouldn't yeh want the glory o' slaying the child o' Chief Fergus himself?"

Ragvar glanced at his men and then at Tristen.

"What are your terms?" He asked.

"If yeh win, ye'll have my blood on your blade." Tristen bargained. "If I win, yer men leaves this island and vows n'ver to return!"

"So it's a fight to the death?" Ragvar questioned. Tristen nodded.

"The only way ye'll be able to kill me." Tristen reminded.

Ragvar nodded and grinned, cruelly. His yellow-stained teeth ever present to the challenger herself. She glared at him with narrowed eyes as he came to a decision. The air was silent around them as he made the call.

"Very well."

To be continued.

**\*\*Please, click that button\*\***

## 7. Thanks

**\*\*Okay, probably the most action pack chapter of this story. In my stories to come of this arc, there will be a whole lot more action and a whole lot more character depth. The purpose of this story is to introduce Tristen. My OC's character will be developing throughout the arc of my stories, my promise. Thank you for all the reviews so far and please do not hesitate to do so. It is open to the public for this very reason. Please review!\*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer, I own nothing. \*\***

**\*\*~Soldier78~\*\***

How to Run

Ch.6: Thanks

"Tristen, are you crazy?" Hiccup asked as he handed Tristen a shield he picked from the Forge. She was working on attaching her scabbard to her belt. "Why would you do that?"

"If he wants me dead, I want him to do it himself." Tristen stated as she was given a metal armband that she wore on the same day she was rescued. It was the only piece of armor she had left from her years of fighting. Gobber approached the duo. Tristen was tightening her armor.

"Tristen, it's time."

Tristen nodded and Hiccup finally helped her tie the piece of armor to her arm.

"Thanks."

He wordlessly held up her shield and she slipped her right arm through the straps, gripping the second in a clenched fist. Another unique thing about Tristen was the fact that she was left-handed, a scary thing on Berk.

Losing himself in the moment, he grabbed her hand before she could move into the ring where Ragvar was waiting. Tristen knew the cue and wrapped her free around him.

"I hope you know what you're doing." Hiccup mumbled. Tristen pulled away. "Good luck."

"Thanksâ€¦for everything." Tristen said. "I owe you one if I survive this."

"Be careful." Hiccup warned. Gobber, even though he thought the moment was beautiful, interrupted.

"C'mon Tristen," Gobber said, pulling the Irish lass by the collar, impatiently. He whispered something in her ear. "Use yer agility."

Tristen heard the gate roll down and she could hear the various cheers coming from around the lip of the bowl that shaped the arena. It was formally the Kill Ring for Dragons which explained the dragon-smelling dungeon the night before.

Tristen nodded to Stoick who sat in his mighty chair. She then saw Ragvar. He was dressed in chainmail and wore a different type of helmet, one without horns.

Tristen flexed her fingers around the strap of her shield and reached for her hilt. Ragvar had his sword already drawn. Tristen glanced upwards slightly. Around Stoick, he saw the faces of her companions. Then, she drew her blade swiftly. The sound resonated in the air. Stoick would announce the fight upon the wish of Gothi who Tristen shared a glance with moments ago. Tristen swallowed and Stoick's voice bellowed.

"Let the fight begin!"

Ragvar had made the first strike. Tristen blocked it with her shield, grunting from the hard impact. She swung her own sword, hitting his weapon instead.

Hiccup watched the violent exchange of attacks. Ragvar brutally smashed Tristen's buckler, shards were flying all over the place and it sent her staggering back. Tristen rarely struck. However, she was able to dodge the strikes. She deflected hits with her shield, swinging it up and down to defend herself. Hiccup bit his lip when Ragvar's sword missed her shield and scraped across her arm. It was lucky that Tristen spun away in time to only receive a minor injury.

Next to him, Astrid hung onto the rails of the cage to get a better look when Ragvar knocked Tristen to the ground with his shield. She feared for the Celt when Ragvar brought his sword down but was quickly relieved when Tristen lifted her shield and came to her feet.

The gruesome sounds of metal colliding shuddered both the witnessing teens and perhaps many others around them. The adults around them, nonetheless, cheered. Hiccup could hear the chant of 'Tristen' but he could also hear Ragvar's name.

When he observed the fight, he cringed when Tristen took a cruel hit to the jaw by Ragvar's bulwark. She staggered back.

Tristen gave a loud shout in agony. As the shield left her line of vision, she saw Ragvar deviously smirk.

"You're pathetic." He sneered. His sword met her sword. She spun and took a swipe, hitting his shield. Effortlessly, he swung his shield again, reeling around and knocking the side of her face. Tristen attempted to strike back.

Then, Tristen felt her skin pierce. She shouted so loud that it could frighten dragons. Ragvar smirked as he drove the blade further into her shoulder, blood oozing out. Tristen collapsed to the ground in pain, battered from the repeated blows and numb from the sword wound. Ragvar pulled his sword out and marched up to the fallen Celt. His metal boot stepped on the arm that held her sword. Her shield long lost in the fray of the fight. She howled even more in pain. The spectators went silent.

Hiccup could see Tristen tremble as Ragvar snarled at her.

"As pathetic as your father." He had said, sinisterly. Tristen could feel her bones crushing from the weight. She groaned loudly and Ragvar got closer. "He was a coward. Begging for mercy when he put him to death."

Tristen tried to fight the image from her mind. She breathed shallowly as she could see the faint picture. Tristen opened her eyes and could see Ragvar gaining closer. She turned her head and saw an object that rested not too far from her good, however bloody, arm.

"Your efforts were fruitless. And you, in turn, ran. Ran away, a disgusting coward." Ragvar jeered. Tristen's hand snuck behind her. A bloody hand touching a piece of shattered wood. Her fingers curled around it as Ragvar readjusted himself to deliver the final blow. Just as that sword came down, her hand came forward. Ragvar froze upon the impact of the wood that had entered his exposed leg.

Without an ounce of reservation, Tristen rolled onto her feet just after Ragvar's foot freed her crushed arm. She stood, showing the critical injuries to the crowd. However, boldly, Tristen grabbed Ragvar's arm as he tried to strike and she thrust her arm forward. A sword, her sword, slid through his throat, the tip of her blade exiting the opposite side with dark scarlet. His eyes bulged wide and she heard him gurgle like a dying man. She glared at him and when he started to slump, she uttered lowly to him.

"My father was twice the man than you." She seethed and she withdrew her blade, cleanly. Her hand released its grasp and Ragvar's body dropped. The arena was completely silent, not a single sound was heard except the wind which decided to blow at that precise moment to give the scene a more dramatic effect. Tristen's contorted expression only glared at the streaks of blood on her weapon. Her eyes drifted onto Stoick who rose from his chair.

"Tristen is the victor!"

Roaring noise erupted from the Vikings and the gate began to open. Tristen staggered out, the sounds of applause channeling through her ears but the memories and pain clouded her mind. She leaned against her sword as she limped out in pain.

To be continued.

**\*\*Please, click that button. \*\***

## 8. Forgiveness

**\*\*This is the last chapter before the epilogue where we will see what will happen to Tristen. For now, thank you for your reviews and please do not hesitate to do so. Again, after this one, look out for my sequel that is in the works and various one-shots that will be grouped into one collection.\*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer, I own nothing.\*\***

**\*\*~Soldier78~\*\***

How to Run

ch.7: Forgiveness

Hiccup left his father's side. Astrid watched briefly before finally following him. They pushed through the crowd of Vikings who cheered for the impressive brawl.

They found Tristen at the mouth of the entrance, sitting and reclining against stone wall. Her fair hand held the bleeding stain on her tunic. Her head was tilted back, her mouth sucking for air.

She tried to forget the pain that surged through her weak body. Next to her leg, her sword painted with scarlet rested.

Hiccup knelt down to the Celt and touched her shoulder. She opened her ocean eyes and looked at him, a thin frown showing. He never saw so much pain in any pair of eyes. Silently and carefully, his hand moved to the stab wound, he looked at it as the blood brushed onto his fingers.

"Get her to my home." ordered Gothi who stood behind. Hiccup and Astrid both looked up at her and Hiccup wrapped his arms around her slim, beaten body. Astrid watched him walk past without an ounce of struggle. She averted her gaze to Tristen's sword and picked it up. Gothi led them to the hut.

Along the trek, Tristen's body went limp and her head fell against Hiccup's collarbone. Her uneven breaths were audible, only signaling that she fell asleep. There was no emotion on Hiccup's face except for the determination to get her safely to the healer's longhouse. Astrid still carried the blade responsible for slaying Ragvar the Fierce.

Hiccup gently set her on the bed once the Elder ordered him to when they arrived. Astrid had pulled open the covers and Hiccup unraveled his arms from Tristen's body once she was secured in the bed. He studied her.

Not that long ago, this fighter stood before the horde of Vikings, barely dressed in any protection, taking on a fight that risked her life 100%. He remembered Fishlegs chattering statistics in his ear about her survival as her small body was tossed around like a bashyball. He felt sick when that sword drove deeply into her skin and then at the foot that smashed her arm. However, he had to admire the strength. Even with life threatening injuries, she still killed the man. She stood before him like an invincible warrior, an Einherjar a skald would sing. He witnessed the sword sliding into his neck and Tristen holding him by the collar of his chainmail. His heart stopped for that moment, just like time. He saw her move her mouth and pull out the weapon. His body dropped like a rock and she moved away, walking towards the exit. He couldn't grasp what just happened that quickly. Ragvar the Fierce, the most legendary of all Viking chiefs, slain by a mere 16 year old Celtic rebel?

There was a skill that Tristen possessed that was very different from Astrid's abilities. Was it something she mastered from her fight for liberation? Hiccup only gazed at the unconscious body. Gothi started to work on her shoulder and she ordered the two Vikings to leave. Hiccup's thoughts were ended when he brushed a piece of Tristen's hair away from her eyes. Astrid waited for him at the door and Hiccup joined her, only pausing to look over his shoulder.

She groaned and opened her eyes. Her blurry vision cleaned up pretty quickly. She coughed and looked around, shifting her head.

She tried to sit up but retracted in pain. She jumped from the surge of agony and looked at the gauze wrapped around her arm and shoulder. Two separate injuries on the same side. Her movable hand stroked the rough cloth with melancholy written on her face. She stared at her arm that caressed the bandage. Her gash made so long ago from her flight was fading into a lengthy scar, long to be forgotten or long



to be a tale for the next generation.

She sat her back against the pillow and stared at the burning hearth across from her. The fire crackled and she watched the flames devour the wood in peace.

"\_The Norse are so close. I can smell them."\_

"\_Will we fight then?"\_

"\_Aye."\_

"\_But Aithair, we're outnumbered."\_

"\_Resources and numbers don't matter when our fight's for freedom, my daughter. An air a bhui do chroi is ann a thabharis do chosa thu."\_

Tristen's eyes fell into narrow slits. A frown graced her weary face. Though the blood was cleaned off, she could feel the air agitate the open cuts wherever they were on her body.

"\_Athair!"\_

"\_Got you, you little runt!"\_

"\_Tristen!"\_

Tristen inhaled deeply, closing her eyes for a quick second. Besides the fire, there was absolute silence. She was convinced that the village Elder had gone out.

"\_Run, Tristen!"\_

Tristen's head turned to the side and saw her side table. Perched on the top rested her necklace tucked neatly. She unearthed her arm from the confines of her blankets and reached over. She picked it up by the pendent and pulled it to her. Her thumb stroked the fine craftsmanship.

"\_As pathetic as your father."\_

Tristen squeezed her eyes shut.

"\_You, in turn, ran awayâ€¦a disgusting coward."\_

Tristen pulled the medallion to her chest, her eyes closed until she heard a sharp roar. She looked at the open window and saw a colorful body saunter up to the opening. The Celt lifted her necklace and it fell around her neck. The blankets were tossed off and Tristen began to rise.

The first couple of steps were the death of her. But as she regained her balance and strength in her limbs, she arrived at the window.

Her hand was reached out and StrÃ³ nuzzled it with so much affection. His rider laughed as he used his tongue to lick her. She giggled and hugged the snout of her trusted friend with her good arm.

"You should be resting."

Tristen watched Gothi walk into the room with her traditional cane. Sudden feeling of guilt panged the girl's heart and she looked down.

"Elderâ€¦I-"

"You were quite reckless to challenge Ragvar to a duel." Gothi reprimanded. "You are lucky that your heart is still beating."

"I'm so sorry, Gothi. I never meant for any of this to happen." Tristen suddenly apologized. Gothi sat in her chair nearby the hearth.

"Child, sit." She ordered in her gentle, sweet voice. Tristen nodded and ventured over there, sitting on the stool and trying to look the old lady in the eye. "Child, never apologize for something unless it's called for."

Tristen looked up.

"But-"

"Listen to me Tristen," Gothi hushed. Tristen swallowed and nodded, waiting for her to continue. "What you did was very foolishâ€¦but nonetheless something to admire."

"Gothi, I put yeh in so much danger." Tristen stated. Before the Elder could stop her, she stopped her. "Please, I need to say to this."

Gothi nodded and sat back. Her chair creaked as she nodded for Tristen to proceed.

"I never meant for any of this to happen." Tristen repeated. "I let myself think that everythin' would be alright and instead, Ragvar didn' just come after me, he got yeh as well and tha's somethin' tha' I can't forgive myself."

"Tristen, you needn't to apologize for something that was completely out of your control." Gothi said. Tristen looked down and Gothi leaned over, touching the girl's shoulder.

"How can yeh forgive-"

"I don't give forgiveness where it isn't needed. I keep telling you that." Gothi retorted. Tristen was about to open her mouth again but she stopped her. "Now let me say this."

Tristen nodded, shamefully and her eyes fell to the floor.

"Tristen, what happened with Ragvar and his men was completely out of your control. You and I didn't know that he would find out so quickly. We misjudged our chances. However, I knew things would work out in the end. I could see it in your eyes after I discovered your secret."

"My secretâ€¦" Tristen mumbled. She looked at Gothi with worried eyes. "What will happen now?"

Gothi rose and Tristen's eyes followed her.

"Well, you don't seem to be going back to sleep anytime soon." Gothi stated, profoundly. "Why don't we find out for ourselves?"

Tristen abided the suggestion and stood up herself. She grimaced from the movement and Gothi pulled out something from her cabinet.

"First, we need to get your arm in a sling."

"â€|again?"

To be continued.

**\*\*Please, click that button. \*\***

## 9. Epilogue

How to Run

Epilogue

Hiccup stood next to his father nearby the large fire pit that warmed and lit the entire Great Hall. Chief Stoick stood there like a true leader as he waited for the perfect time to begin the ceremony. Practically the whole tribe was in the Great Hall for this important event.

Stoick the Vast held up his mighty hands that silenced the entire hall without him uttering a single word. Hiccup was completely intimidated by his powerful father. He was already a toothpick compared to his size but to see his father hush the crowd with just the raise of his arms, daunted Hiccup further.

"We come here to honor and deem a new member of the Hairy Hooligan tribe!" Stoick proclaimed loudly. He lowered his hands. "Tristen! Come forth!"

Hiccup saw the crowd slightly separate to allow this new member to squeeze through. Hiccup was now able to fully see Tristen's battered shape. Her face had a new cut across her forehead, a dark purple bruise rested on the right side of her jaw and her arm was back in a cast like it was months ago. Hiccup was glad he could not see the dark hole in her shoulder and he was glad it was appearing to heal nicely.

Tristen slowly marched forward, her face was passive but not like the day she was ready to die on. There was something else about this expression. From the corner of his eye, he noticed Astrid practically beaming at Tristen, who looked back and gave a curt nod in respect.

Tristen stopped just a couple of feet from Stoick. Hiccup noticed that she was wearing a sleeveless tunic and her cross was no longer tucked away behind her shirt. Now the whole world could see who she really was, that cross would be a living testimony to Berk, but so would the conclusion of this ordinance.

"Tristen, you were brought here by my son when you were found shipwrecked and near death." Stoick spoke openly. "He brought you here to our Village Healer who took up the responsibility of sheltering you. You then received a position at our village blacksmith shop where you became a helpful aid to my son. We didn't count on Ragvar the Fierce's surprise visit to finally realize who you really were. Who you actually are does not change our conception about you. Ragvar said you were worthless, troublesome rebel but we only see you as a brave, perhaps reckless, warrior who deserves a home like any other man, woman or child! So, under the name of our Gods and on behalf of the village, I declare you a member of the Hairy Hooligan Tribe! On behalf of the entire village, I say your name to be Tristenâ€|the Keen!"

There was an uproar of celebration coming from the crowd. Hiccup felt a small smile come upon him as Tristen smiled genuinely at his father. There was something about that smile that made Hiccup's heart jump.

Stoick then presented something to Tristen.

"Normally we would present you with a sword," Stoick acknowledged. "But I cannot allow you to replace your own sword that shares a strong connection with you. So, I give you this shield as a token of our loyalty to you."

Tristen was handed the great shield and she looked at it with interest. She looked at the symbol on the shield. It was a traditional Celtic knot painted in red and black.

Stoick concluded the ceremony, shouting Tristen's rightful name to the crowd.

"I present to you, Tristen O'Riley the Keen!"

Tristen watched the sun slip beneath the sea. She supposed she was content or happy but she also felt something indescribable, she could name many emotions but none suited her satisfactorily. Tristen looked down and lifted her shield to examine the work. No doubt Hiccup had something to do with this shield, or maybe that Fishlegs kid who could've told him about the knot.

A Viking shield bearing an Irish mark, Tristen smiled ruefully at the bitter irony. Two enemies pressed into one inanimate object.

"I helped Hiccup with that shield."

Tristen turned to see Astrid approaching her.

"Yeh found the symbol?" Tristen asked finally. Astrid gave a nod.

"I found it in a book." She answered.

"Triquentra." Tristen named. Astrid looked at her. "The meanin' can be translated in diff'rent ways. thought, feeling and emotion, mother maiden and crone, the three Celtic worldsâ€|or the holy trinity. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Astrid smiled, not fully expecting a lesson at that moment, but

admiring the Celt's knowledge of home.

"I wanted you to have something that reminded you of your true heritage."

"Aye. Go raibh maith agat." Tristen nodded.

"Are you coming or not Astrid?!" shouted one of the other teens.

"I'm coming!" Astrid shouted back, irate. Tristen smiled but Astrid looked at her with a welcoming glint in her eye. "Come on, I challenge you to a race."

Tristen's smile broadened and instantly followed Astrid to the flock of dragons.

Tristen the Keen had forgotten what it was like to feel home.

She was done running.

The end.

End  
file.